

BRAC IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY – February 24, 2009

- John Carman called the Committee to order at 7:30 p.m.
- Phil Alperson provided the following updates:
 - **County Executive Leggett's responded** on February 18 to BRAC Committee's February 3 letter regarding long-range coordination of transportation projects in the area. The County Executive's letter is posted with this summary.
 - **Senator Mikulski has appointed a formal Montgomery County liaison --** Jahantab Siddiqui. We can all him J-Tab, but more important – we can call him!
 - **The Economic Stimulus bill enacted into law on February 17** includes a U.S. Dept. of Transportation discretionary grant program totaling \$1.5 Billion, for projects of regional or national significance. These funds can be awarded to state or local governments or regional transportation agencies. Awards can range from \$20 Million to \$300 Million, and the usual requirement of local matching funds can be waived. These projects do not have to be “shovel-ready” but the funds awarded need to be spent by the end of FY2011 (September 30, 2011), which conveniently coincides with the BRAC completion deadline. The federal Dept. of Transportation has three months to develop this grant program and Phil will explore ways to see if this program can fund the Metro entrance project.
 - **Other stimulus news:** Transportation dollars for shovel-ready projects are being funneled to the State of Maryland (MDOT), which is focusing on safety and maintenance of existing infrastructure, such as bridge and road repairs. The BRAC intersections project isn't shovel-ready and won't qualify for these funds.
 - **Congress – FY10 Appropriations Process:** Montgomery County officials met on Feb. 23 with Congressional staffers in the annual begathon to seek earmarks in the FY10 Appropriations bills. This process should be completed by next September but the initial crafting of the legislation is moving now. It is not known now how much (if any) earmarking will be permitted, but the Congressional delegation continues to pursue BRAC transportation funding.
 - **FY09 Appropriations:** County officials were informed about the FY09 Omnibus Appropriations bill that is moving now. FY09 funding should have been completed last September, but instead numerous federal agencies (including transportation) have been operating under a Continuing Resolution. Congress is now considering legislation to finish funding tFY2009. **The House Omnibus Appropriations bill includes a Transportation earmark of \$3,087,500** designated for BRAC-related improvements in Montgomery County. The Senate still needs to act, and then a Conference Bill needs to be crafted and approved.

- SHA intersections project. SHA hopes to use the next regularly scheduled BRAC Committee meeting – March 17 – to preview the plans they will present in public workshops later in March.
- On a related matter, it was noted that MC-DOT sent flyers to residents near the Cedar Lane bridge over Rock Creek informing them of a bridge repair project that could require the bridge to be closed for some months in 2010 or 2011. Concerns were expressed that the comment period about the project was too short, and that this project may occur simultaneous to potential BRAC work at the Cedar Lane/Rockville Pike intersection that could cause massive disruptions to the neighborhood. Questions were raised whether the County DOT was coordinating this project with the state DOT. Phil indicated he had already contacted MC-DOT about this and was assured that it is standard policy for the agencies to coordinate their work. John Carman suggested that information be posted on the BRAC web site about ongoing projects that aren't related to BRAC but are of concern to the BRAC-impacted neighborhoods.
- **Presentation by WMATA -- Status report on evaluation of proposed east-side Metro entrance/pedestrian access project at Medical Center Metro station.** Robin McElhenny-Smith and Bill Gallagher of WMATA gave a status report on the evaluation being conducted by WMATA on the proposal for an east-side entrance/pedestrian access improvement at the Medical Center Metro station. This is not a formal study, in that it does not include a complete environmental assessment or firm cost estimates; rather it is an initial overview that can be used as the basis for a project for some government entity. The evaluation addresses two issues: providing convenient access to the Metro station for NNMC commuters and providing thousands of pedestrians in the area – particularly Metro riders, bus riders, and local residents -- a way to cross MD 355 at this key transit facility without impeding traffic or risking their lives. The matter of ensuring enhanced pedestrian safety for those approaching the Metro station from other neighborhoods was discussed. SHA indicated that its intersection work would include pedestrian enhancements. *The WMATA PowerPoint is attached to this meeting summary:* <https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/wmata-metroentranceupdate-022409.pdf>.

Five alternatives are being analyzed:

1. **At-grade pedestrian enhancements** with minor changes to the roadway but don't include a new Metro entrance, a tunnel or an overpass. This would be a low-cost way to make improvements such as a safety median for pedestrians, and enhanced road markings, signaling and other pedestrian management features.
2. **High-speed elevators on the NNMC side of MD 355** that would descend over 100 feet to a short tunnel directly to the Metro platform. This would provide direct Metro access to NNMC commuters but would not address the pedestrian issue. Some pedestrian enhancements describes in Option #1 would be included.

3. **A shallow tunnel (approx 25 below ground) connected to elevators and/or escalators on both sides of MD 355.** This would address the pedestrian issue but would not provide the most convenient access to the Metro from NNMC. A shallow tunnel could be constructed using the “cut and cover” method or tunnel-boring. Cut and cover is less expensive but more disruptive to traffic during construction.
4. **A combination of deep elevators and the shallow tunnel with elevators** (#2 and #3 above). This would be the “Cadillac” version, being the most expensive design but allowing the best pedestrian crossing and the most convenient access to Metro.
5. **A pedestrian bridge connected to elevators on both sides of MD 355.** This would be a less expensive way to provide safe pedestrian crossing but would be indirect and inconvenient for Metro access. Some transportation planners believe many pedestrians would bypass a bridge that doesn’t directly connect to a destination and instead would attempt to cross MD 355. Some pedestrian enhancements describes in Option #1 would be included.

WMATA indicated a number of issues making it difficult to derive firm cost estimates, including the relocation of utilities, subsurface geological investigations, and construction methods. WMATA provided graphs assessing the estimated impacts and cost/benefits of each option. *These graphs are included in the WMATA PowerPoint that is attached to this summary:* <https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/wmata-metroentranceupdate-022409.pdf>.

The post-construction impacts criteria were:

1. Pedestrian conflicts with vehicular traffic
2. Vehicular delays
3. Pedestrian travel time

Cost/benefit criteria were:

1. Order of Magnitude (estimated cost of construction)
2. Traffic disruption during construction

WMATA discussed next steps. They expect this evaluation to be finalized within two months. While MDOT sponsored this report, no government entity or transportation agency has committed to moving forward. State or local agencies will make that determination sometime after the report is completed. Meanwhile, DOD will process this information as it considers the DAR (Defense Access Road) certification request that the NNMC Base Commander submitted last year. This document will also be useful if an application is made for a federal Stimulus Transportation grant discussed earlier in the evening.

- **Postponed to a later date:** Presentation by Ken Hartman, Director of the BCC Services Center, of a proposal regarding the future operations of the BRAC Implementation Committee.
- **The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 17, 2009, 7:30 p.m. at the B-CC Regional Services Center. The main agenda item will be a preview by the State Highway Administration of its presentation at public workshops later in March on the BRAC intersections project.**

Committee members in attendance, February 24, 2009:

Phil Alperson, County BRAC Coordinator
 Ed Krauze for Jon Alterman, Bethesda-Parkview Citizens Association
 John Carman, Committee Chairman
 Dave Dabney, Bethesda Urban Partnership
 Shahriar Etemadi, M-NCPPC
 Chuck Floyd
 Leslie Weber for Brian Gragnolati, Suburban Hospital
 Ilaya Hopkins, East Bethesda Citizens Assn.
 Ginanne Italiano, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce
 Janet Maalouf, Maplewood Citizens Assn.
 Debbie Michaels, Glenbrook Village Home Owners Assn.
 Lulu Gonella for Michael Plantamura, Chevy Chase View
 Andy Scott, MDOT
 Paul Thaler, Locust Hill Citizens Association
 Sara Morningstar for Melanie Wenger, Montgomery County Intergovernmental Relations
 Ron Wilson for Dan Wheeland, NIH

Ex-officio:

Jahantab “J-Tab” Siddiqui (Sen. Barbara Mikulski)
 Ken Reichard (Sen. Ben Cardin)
 Joan Kleinman (Rep. Chris Van Hollen)
 Miti Figueredo (Council Member Roger Berliner)
 Jeff Miller, NNMC Transportation Program Manager
 David “Ollie” Oliveria, NNMC BRAC Program Manager
 Capt. Daniel Zinder, Deputy Commander NNMC

Other attendees

Neil Becker, Coakley-Williams
 Sara Benson, WMATA
 Laurent Cartayrade, EarthTech AECOM
 Gerald Cichy, Maryland Transit Administration
 Lindsey Dunn, Clark Construction
 Cyrena Eitler, OEA

Bill Gallagher, WMATA
Neil Greene, Action Committee for Transit
Richard Hoyer, Council Member Duchy Trachtenberg
Jessica Juriga, WMATA
Juvonnie Kinchen-Schneider, NNMC
Robin McElhenny-Smith, WMATA
Claudia Meer, Edgemoor Real estate Services
Mal Rivkin
Nick Schmidt, WMATA
Andrew Ujifusa, Gazette Newspapers
Luciana Varkulja, KGP Design Studio
Robert Weesner North Chevy Chase